



P.O. Box 1406  
Wall Street Station  
New York, NY 10268-1406  
tel 212.349.6009 fax 212.349.6810  
www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org

August 19, 2010

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
Building II-Suite 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My name is Avidah Moussavian. I am a senior staff attorney at the Immigration Intervention Project at Sanctuary for Families and I supervised Joy Ziegeweid's work this summer.

Sanctuary for Families is the largest nonprofit in New York State dedicated exclusively to serving domestic violence victims and their children. Sanctuary for Families' Center for Battered Women's Legal Services (the Legal Center) is the largest provider of legal services exclusively for victims of domestic violence in the country. It offers comprehensive legal advice, assistance, and representation to domestic violence victims in cases involving divorce, child custody/visitation, child and spousal support, immigration, and prosecution of batterers in criminal matters.

The Legal Center specializes in providing services for immigrant and undocumented battered women, who make up the majority of its clientele. The Immigration Intervention Project provides immigrant victims of domestic and gender-based violence with legal services that allow them to formalize their immigration status in the United States. Sanctuary staff and interns assist clients with immigration relief by filing Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitions and battered spouse waivers, as well as applications for asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), U nonimmigrant status, and T nonimmigrant status.

This summer Ms. Ziegeweid took on responsibilities related to nearly every type of service we offer our immigrant clients. She worked with successful VAWA self-petitioners to file their green card applications and conducted intakes for potential VAWA clients. She researched the standard of proof and acceptable evidence for showing a pattern or practice of persecution in order to make an asylum claim based on a fear of future persecution, wrote a research memo on the topic, and revised that material into a section of a brief in application for asylum

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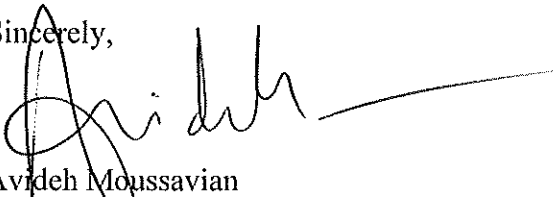
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for a detained client. Ms. Ziegeweid attended outside trainings on Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and then conducted additional research into petitioning for guardianship as part of a SIJS petition in New York State. She forged a strong relationship with a client and her minor son and filed their applications for U nonimmigrant status. Because this client had multiple grounds of inadmissibility, Ms. Ziegeweid also filed additional forms and affidavits to have those grounds waived. Ms. Ziegeweid worked tirelessly this summer to assist one of our Russian-speaking trafficking victims in replacing her lost identity documents and obtaining travel documents and permission for her minor children to leave their home country and reunite with her in New York. Ms. Ziegeweid's tenacity and cultural and linguistic skills were invaluable in working with the client's home-country consulate in New York.

In addition to her excellent work with clients, Ms. Ziegeweid was eager to take on research and writing assignments. We are particularly grateful for her research into state laws governing access to vital records. She compiled a table of the statutes from all fifty states and wrote a memorandum summarizing national trends in vital records laws in contrast with New York State's law, which is restrictive and burdensome for domestic violence victims estranged from their spouses who nevertheless must obtain proof of their spouses' identity.

We were pleased that Ms. Ziegeweid received an Equal Justice America fellowship to help fund her internship at Sanctuary for Families this summer. Should you require additional information about her internship, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Avideh', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Avideh Moussavian  
Senior Staff Attorney, Immigration Intervention Project